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17 December 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: 17 December Meeting of the Indochina Steering Group

25X1A

1. [REDACTED] gave a brief run-down on the Ban Ban operation. He described it as "probably in trouble" but for various reasons it is not possible to reach a final conclusion at this juncture. The time table for the operation has been extended two weeks. The field considers the operation to have been a success in that it has defanged an enemy offensive against Ban Na. The consensus around the room was that this field view is certainly questionable and unfortunately shifts the rationale away from the original intent which was to seize supplies at Ban Ban and then get out.

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2. [REDACTED] also briefed on the situation in south Laos. [REDACTED] were put in the area near Pak Song four days ago. They have been probed and harassed for the past three days and thus far have reacted well. [REDACTED] described the friendly position at [REDACTED] on the eastern rim of the Bolovens Plateau as appearing quite firm now. The first [REDACTED] will go into [REDACTED] southwest of [REDACTED] by the end of the week.

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3. [REDACTED] mentioned a report which has been very tightly held (I believe he said it was in the [REDACTED] series).

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4. I noted that our Cambodian memo would be circulated in parts for comment and coordination beginning the end of this week. We expect to have it ready for dissemination prior to Christmas. I noted too that we had never received any word of details pertaining to US air strikes in North Vietnam last month and we remain curious as to what was hit and what were the effects. [REDACTED] said that DOD officers continue to promise the data but nothing has been received to date.

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5. [REDACTED] asked how we were getting along with the memo on the mood in North Vietnam since Ho's death. I said I would check the status and report back.

6. [REDACTED] referred to recent intelligence--both [REDACTED]--indicating rather stringent Cambodian plans for dealing with enemy-held areas. One government commander was recommending razing an entire town and consideration is being given to destroying an entire rice patch in Kompong Cham. [REDACTED] described this as a "helluva way to nation build." It was agreed that [REDACTED] would write up a brief note and that it would be used to send [REDACTED]

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7. [REDACTED] reported that he had talked with the Director, Secretary Laird, and Phil Habib about the need for careful US planning concerning upcoming presidential elections in South Vietnam. Habib has in turn raised the subject with Kissinger and Secretary Rogers. [REDACTED] concluded that the "seed has been planted."

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8. [REDACTED] reported a continuing lack of progress on NSSMs 99 and 96. There will be another meeting of the wheels on NSSM 99 sometime prior to 1 January.

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[REDACTED]
Deputy Director of Current Intelligence

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